

Bristol, March. 2<sup>nd</sup> 1845.

My dear Mr. May.

My direct duty is to thank you for your letter of Dec. 30 addressed to me; but I must also acknowledge the pleasure I have experienced in <sup>being</sup> permitted to peruse your communications to other Bristol friends.

Your account of the Fair much interested us, my daughter especially, who had been a very active agent in collecting & packing the Bristol box of treasures. The various accounts in the newspapers from America of the Fair also greatly amused us, and the letters that have been sent in acknowledgment of our present, show a degree of deep feeling on the part of the writers, really affecting, & calculated much to deepen the sympathy of the friends in this neighbourhood who have begun to take an interest in the <sup>cause</sup> which so absorbs those who have embarked in the abolition movement in America.

My daughter was somewhat disconcerted at seeing an extract of her letter in the newspapers with her name to it. Without names no one, I am sure, would object to the extracts from letters which might be considered useful: hence the appearance of a lady's name in a paper as the writer of a letter, is quite unusual. But it is altogether a matter of little moment. I was pleased to find my speculation of R. Rogers' hair so successful. If any new arising, bring to what you please <sup>it be</sup> with it. I should be most happy to send you or any friend some, if of any value.

I have it much in my mind again at the next Fair, to draw up a very concise statement, (as a sort of hand bill to induce persons to contribute to the Fair) of the purposes & effects of the Anti Slavery



So<sup>r</sup> in Boston. You can hardly believe how few persons in this country have any correct idea of the case in any of its bearings. Many who contributed to our last Bristol box, most, indeed, asked how is the money employed in forwarding the freedom of slaves.

Some of the evils of slavery must be mentioned. If it were possible than any on your side of the water could draw up a such a statement as would be suited to the kind of ignorance here of the people here, I would ask you to do it. But that is not possible.

Tens of thousands in this country believe that in general the American Slaves are very happy, & that Abolitionists must be officious meddlers.

I believe I am pretty well up to the subject of the Massachusetts Anti Slavery proceedings, for last winter, during a long absence, I entered fully into it. Dr. Follen's Life was read to me, and my impression was that important as the A. S. movement was, he rather narrowed his field of useful exertion by so completely identifying himself with the Abolitionists. Miss Monticane completely opposed this view in a letter I had from her, and expressed herself so strongly on the subject, that I proceeded to go this ~~rather~~ all the Annual Reports of the Mass. A. S. Soc<sup>y</sup>. I could procure, and many of the standard publications: for this examination I was too, rather disposed, from the communications I had with Dr. Dewey while he was in Bristol. Mr. James & I took in the Liberator, so you will see that I have a little space continually added to my knowledge of the matter, which will prevent it from perishing.

Perhaps however, I may ask you a question or two, to secure accuracy



as to facts. Do not mention any such intention of mine when you write to Lyland, as I may not succeed to my desire, and if nothing comes of my intention, no one will be disappointed. I want both to help the bazaar, and to get up a little interest here in behalf of the important cause of the abolition of slavery in America.

Thanks for your account of the affair of Mr. Sargeant & Mr. Parker. I knew too little of the extent in which different brethren who exchanged differed in theological views, to be able to form a satisfactory conclusion on the subject. If the orthodox might breach the Trinity, Original Sin & the Atonement, I should think Mr. Parker should have been allowed to give each also: he would ever let them they, I should suppose, in the opinion of many of the regular attendants at the chapel? Here, a Minister who held Mr. P.'s views in the sermon I have read, would meet with no favour from either pastor or people of a Unitarian Congregation. We should have no objection to his preaching his views in any place of his own, but should no more think of inviting him to one of our pulpits than we should a few Western Catholics. We have no formal creed, but we believe in the divine mission, miracles & resurrection of Christ, and without condemning those who deny them, we have no desire to hear the opposite asserted arguments of such, in our pulpits. Mr. Parker's sermon I thought not above mediocrity, & not in the best taste. Mr. Sargeant's I have also read. Was not his D. Ship in a duty too important to be given up in consequence of what had occurred? The resolutions of the Committee I thought judicious, & temperate.



Am I right in regarding my American brethren as rather a  
"genus irritabile"? <sup>Parker claims to be a X<sup>n</sup>. "Whoso shall do it, will be his character - his labours - his zeal in good works, far outstripping that of the great majority of his more orthodox clerical brethren."</sup>

In a letter to Mr. James you ask what my opinion is of  
Miss Mortimer's case? I have no hesitation in saying  
I believe her recovery has been accelerated by Mesmerism.  
Her local disease had begun to subside before she had recovered  
to Mr. her faith in this influence inspired her with hope,  
gave courage to her efforts to leave off opiates, use exercise,  
& resume her usual habits, and greatly aided in her  
restoration. But with the recovery of bodily health, she has  
extensively lost <sup>the</sup> credit for of having a sound mind. She rapidly  
with which she believed, & published her convictions of the  
mesmeric performances of J. was most lamentable. To many  
of her best friends, her fall in public estimation is more  
especially to those who had seen her powerful mind com-  
mend respect & attention from persons most opposed  
to her political & theological views. Her admissions & dependence  
of former days can now say nothing when the present ex-  
ample of her weakness is pointed at in proof of their former  
exaggerated appreciation of her intellectual powers.  
Her nearest relatives are much annoyed by the course she has  
taken, & that unnecessary publicity she has <sup>given to</sup> brought herself and  
her camp claims, ~~as~~ which most ladies, circumstanced as  
she was, would have shrank from.

The more I see, hear, & read of Mesmerism the more dis-  
posed am I to regard doubt in various instances, the honesty

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of its abettors, and I am convinced that others without meaning  
to deceive in the outset, become so entangled of the subject from  
the interest, excitement & excitement produced, as to be self-deluded.

This readiness to renounce common sense in judging of mental  
phenomena quite akin to hysteresis & misadventure, is an extraordi-  
nary feature in the affair. What more inexplicable than for a  
woman of Miss Martineau's strong sense, on so little sifted evidence,  
believing that J. could tell the particulars of a shipwreck of  
which she had heard no account! From the moment I read  
Miss Martineau's unfortunate letter, I felt satisfied that  
she was imposed upon by her servant, & J. J.'s duplicity  
has already been ~~discovered~~ discovered & exposed: it ~~was~~ has been  
acknowledged by the admission of her aunt, that she had heard  
the history of the shipwreck, <sup>between 2 & 3</sup> I know before she narrated it  
in her memoirs sleep. There is strong reason for doubting  
the honesty of Miss M's kind mesmerizing friend. In York,  
where she lives, she is by no means respected, she is a Mrs.  
Wynyard, a clergyman's widow.

I believe every reported instance of clairvoyance, lucidity  
prevision, mental travelling, phreno-magnetic dowsing  
mediuming with closed eyes, to be fraud, - not always a deli-  
berate, intentional fraud, in some cases, a morbid tendency  
to deceive, induced by the excitement of the nervous system  
from the supposed power of Mesmerism. To an unmedical  
man, this may be unintelligible, but to us it is not so. I  
believe there is no such thing as magnetic power, or other in-  
fluence communicated from one human being to another



without the knowledge of the recipient that something  
was about to be done, or communicated, or that some  
effects were expected: that is, I believe no one was ever  
mesmerised without knowing that something was to  
be done, or suffered. - A minute investigation of facts  
always weakens their truth. A case of amputation has  
sometimes since been performed at the <sup>Leicester</sup> ~~Nottingham~~ Infirmary  
said to be without suffering, & in mesmeric sleep. One of  
the hospital surgeons present doubted the fact: the case  
is at least ambiguous. - The woman was some time before  
in the family way, & being unmarried, denied to the last her  
condition, & at length gave birth to a child without a  
symptom of suffering. - This case then is not a happy  
one. - I believe however, that in some nervous persons  
a sort of fit, and drowsiness may be produced by fixing  
the eyes, & by movements which are believed to have  
the power of communicating an influence, and like  
hysterical seizures may be encouraged or repressed ac-  
cording to the determination of the patient.

For any cases however wonderful, I am fully dis-  
posed to allow Mesmerism every credit; for as ex-  
traordinary ones can be instances produced in a hundred  
different ways where the mind is powerfully checked or  
& Hope, Fear, Faith, or some other mental sentiment is  
strongly called into action. Clergymen have, and the



acceding believers in Mesmerism. But I am writing on a very worth less subject.

Can you give me a short reply to some of these questions as a help to me in drawing up a brief anti-slavery statement to promote the interests of the next fair

I - What is the number of active Abolitionists supposed to be in the N. States?

II - What the status in life of those devoting their time & money to the cause, - Miss Kelly, Mrs Chapman &c.?

III - Is not the conduct of the Clergy & others, (Dr. Dewey a type) towards the free colored people a proof of their not being very sincere in the sentiments they profess as to the sin of Slavery?

IV - What line of conduct does the principle of "Non-resistance with Slave holders" require?

V - Is the statement too strong, that in the South<sup>n</sup> States teaching the Slave to read the Bible, is a capital offence if persevered in after a first conviction?

VI - Supposing the Clergy & gentry of the North were willing to become real Abolitionists, what course would it be wise & judicious for them to pursue?

VII - Might not the present denouncers of "Slavery in the Abstract" (Dr. Dewey again?) do something towards the abolition of the Slave trade in Columbia District, without compromising other opinions, <sup>they profess to hold</sup> as to the rights of the Slaveholders, & the hazards of interfering with this "difficult subject"?



Are not the present efforts of Abolitionists more to awaken the National conscience to the sin of Slavery & the necessity of some change, rather than for the purpose of pointing out deficiencies to men of color? Immediate, unconditional, unrequited emancipation; none I presume contend for? What are the principal objects for which the Abol<sup>n</sup> need pecuniary funds? What <sup>change</sup> sort of conduct towards the free colored people on the part of the inhabitants of the North is necessary to place them on a level with the white population? I know I have given you questions for a Volume, but I know also you can condense a reply.

March 2/45  
 Came by 4th April 1845  
 to the care of  
 Rev. Samuel May  
 Boston, America.

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account of the  
 The annexation of Texas has reached us. Will it not turn to good? Will not your clerical declaimers against "Slavery in the Abstract," and the grandiloquent protesters against the Annexation, feel now called upon to sympathize more of with the Abolitionists? The Inquirer of last week (March 29<sup>th</sup>) has a short, but spirited article on the Annexation of Texas. Our papers however do not deal in such vituperative exposures as yours do, & I think speak with more force in consequence.

The Shewell's of Quis Panwich are gone to reside 12 miles off, at Still Camp. His works near Abercrom, move to the eastward. Believe me, my dear Sir,  
 Yours most truly J. B. Estlin.  
 My daughter begs her kind remembrance.